

Seattle City Council

Public Safety, Government Relations, and Arts Committee Meeting

Tuesday, 2:00 PM, August 15, 2006

Words' Worth

The Poetry Program of the Seattle City Council

Curated by **Jeannette Allée**

Today's poet is **Gary Hill**

Gary Hill was born in Santa Monica, CA and currently lives in Seattle. Originally a sculptor, Hill began working with sound, text, and video in the early 1970's and has produced a large body of both single-channel video works and mixed-media installations. His video, installation and performance work has been presented at museums and institutions throughout the world, including solo exhibitions at the Musée national d'art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Guggenheim Museum SoHo, NY; Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Öffentliche Kunstsammlung, Basel; Museu d'Art Contemporani, Barcelona; and Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, among others. Hill has received fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Rockefeller and Guggenheim Foundations, and has been the recipient of numerous awards and honors, most notably the Leone d'Oro Prize for Sculpture at the Venice Biennale in 1995 and a John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation "Genius" Grant in 1998.

Site Recite (a prologue)

by Gary Hill

Nothing seems to have ever been moved. There is something of every description which can only be a trap. Maybe it all moves proportionately cancelling out change and the estrangement of judgement. No, an other order pervades. It's happening all at once, I'm just a disturbance wrapped up in myself, a kind of ghost vampirically passing through the forest passing through the trees.

A vague language drapes everything but the walls — what walls? The very walls that never vary — my enclosure, so glorious from a distance, stands on the brink of nothing like a four legged table. What is it? An island with a never ending approach? A stopgap from when to where? Something to huddle over with my elbows like trestles without tracks, the bases of which are scattered with evidence of unsolved crimes? The overallness of it all soaks through, runs through the holes in my hands and continues to

run amok, overturning rocks that should not be overturned, breaking bread that should not be broken.

The sun will rise and I won't know what to do with it. Its beak will torture me as will its slow movement, the movement it invented that I can only reiterate. The quieter and stiller I become the livelier everything else seems to get. The longer I wait the more the little deaths pile up. Bodily sustenance is no longer an excuse. Too much time goes by to take it by surprise.

So much remains. No doubt it can all be counted. Starting with any one, continuing on with any other one until all is accounted for, a consensus is reached. That it can all be shelved in all its quantized splendor, this then is the turf.

These sightings. This scene before me made up of just so many *just* views (nature's constituency) sits with indifference to the centripetal vanishing point that mentality posits so falsely. Brain, minding business, incessantly constructs an infinite series of makeshifts designed to perpetuate the picture--the one like all others that holds its breath for a thousand words, conversely exhales point zero zero one pictures. This insidious wraparound, tied to the notion "I have eyes in the back of my head," binds me to my double, implodes my being to a mere word as it winds the world around my mouth. A seamless scroll weaves my view back into place--back to back with itself--the boomerang effect, decapitates any and all hallucinations leaving (lo and behold) the naked eye, stalking each and every utterance that breaks and enters the dormitories of perception.

I must become a warrior of self-consciousness and move my body to move my mind to move the words to move my mouth to spin the spur of the moment.

Imagining the brain closer than the eyes.

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